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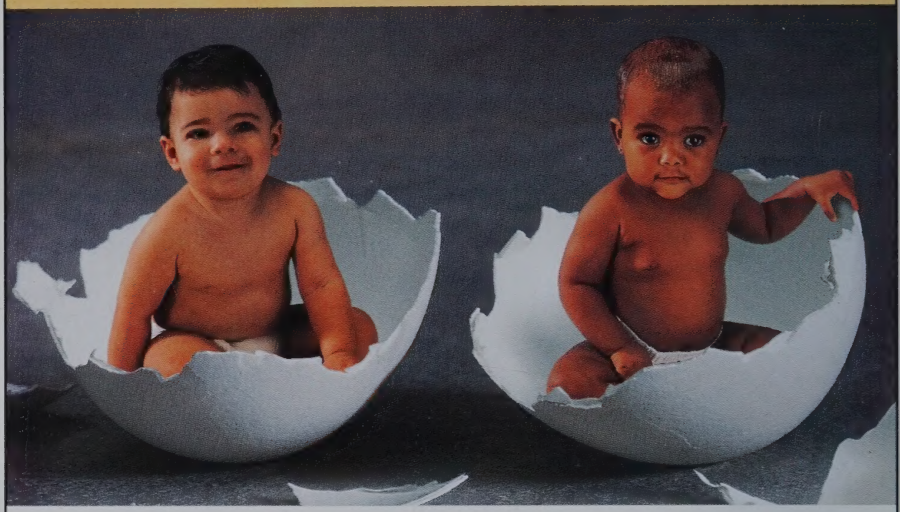

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VOL. 3 NO. 8 APRIL 1999

CONTENTS

DEPARTMENTS

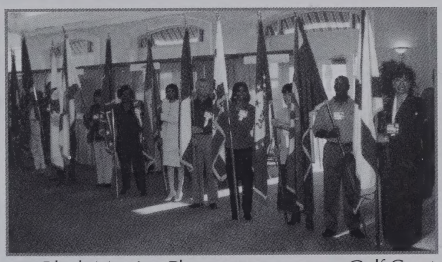
4 Publisher's Page

8 Movie Review: *Life*

22 Health

25 Briefs

30 Calendar



Black Meeting Planners convene on Gulf Coast

Mr. and Mrs. George T. Watson
of Pass Christian
Cover photo by Eric Labat

FEATURES

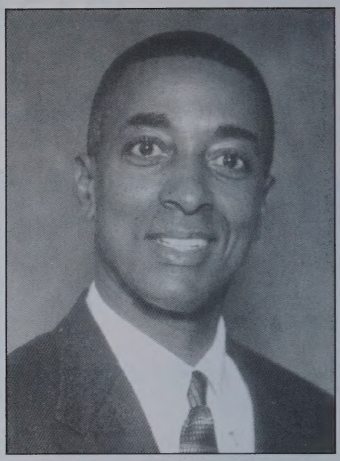
10 Philip and Beverly Williams' Family Businesses

15 An Example of Hard Work, Teamwork and Happiness

27 Coalition of Black Meeting Planners Meet on Gulf Coast

BUSINESS TEAM:
Philip and Beverly Williams

PUBLISHER'S PAGE



Maurice Singleton

Family is the ultimate support system. I have always believed this, however two situations which I observed very recently confirmed this for me once again.

In the first situation, a childhood friend was confronting a challenge with what appeared to be an inevitable outcome. He had confided in me regarding this situation that he "knew" he couldn't handle. Without going into the particulars, I will say that my friend was quite sure that he could not handle the situation, which was the approaching death of someone very close to him.

When the person passed on, my friend was the pillar of strength. It was as if the strength of his support system was absorbed by him immediately upon the death of the person close to him. It was as if my friend had been transformed. With the support of other family members, he planned the funeral and consoled his siblings before, during and after the funeral service.

The other situation involves the famous singing group the *Jackson Five* or *The Jacksons* and their family. Over the course of their thirty-year career, members of the family have been victims of vicious rumors and media attacks. However the family in a remarkable way keeps rolling along, polishing their crafts and talents, with various members of the family rising to the top of the music industry.

In a recent Fox Television Network feature, Katherine Jackson, the mother of the talented entertainers talked about the family and about the challenges and successes. It was

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quite apparent that the events that caused hurt and pain to the family hurt her most. But it was also quite apparent that hurt and pain were only a part of the big picture and that neither hurt or pain were ever going to slow the family from doing what they do best. It appeared that the Jackson family would be producing quality music for generations to come.

In each situation, it was crises that united and strengthened bonds between family members. Crises appeared to be the consistent fuel that energized and provided focus to the family.

As I look back at some of the more difficult times growing up with my siblings, it was during times of crisis that we pulled together and put aside the pettiness that divided us. It was during times of crisis that the best of the human spirit surfaced. When a crisis presented, I can recall my parents as well as my sisters and brothers, rising to the occasion.

It would be great if families did not need crisis to bring about strength and other positive traits and qualities, but that appears to be the way it is in our society. Certainly, the young people in our families, churches and communities would have great examples if they saw more situations with positive interaction and favorable communication. Wouldn't that be a great standard for our communities and a solid expectation for our children?

Letters to the Publisher

should be 100 words or less.

Star Calendar: Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact. Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month.

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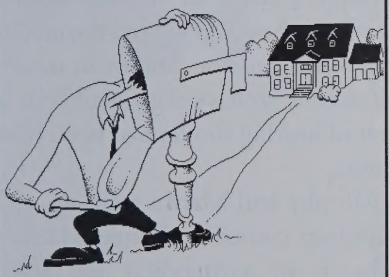

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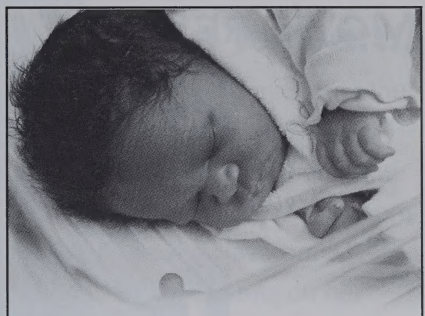

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MOVIE REVIEW

Life, a movie about two young men framed for the murder of a card-playing con artist in the Mississippi Delta in the early 1900s is guaranteed to make you laugh with the antics of the stars, Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence. On what was supposed to be a weekend bootleg run from New York City to the Mississippi Delta and back to New York, the two are arrested and end up being sentenced to life in prison. The story then builds on the survival instincts and craftiness and wit of Murphy and Martin.

Murphy reminds audiences of the old quick-witted, fast-talking Eddie from *Trading Places, Beverly Hills Cop* and his other earlier movies. Lawrence plays a character on the verge of starting a career as a bank teller when his plans are put on hold as he is conned into a life-threatening situation by the character played by Murphy.

As you might guess, the four-letter word count is high, particularly in the early part of the movie, but disappears as the story develops and the audience becomes involved in the lives of two innocent men trapped in a Mississippi prison.

In one of the funniest scenes, Eddie's character is reading the mail of one of the inmates who had been holding a letter from home for six months. The letter informs him that his parents had died as well as three or four other family members. When Murphy's character finishes reading the letter, he offers to read the mail of the other inmates. Almost in unison all decline to have their mail read in fear of hearing similar bad news from home.

Murphy and Martin team up with stand-up comedian Bernie Mack in what is an outstanding film about the development and maintenance of a friendship. The film also has an interesting, well-developed secondary story regarding how hate catches up with itself.

Life attracted more viewers than any other film in theaters over its first weekend. It grossed nearly $20 million during the three-day period, April 16-18.

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Philip and Beverly Williams' Family Businesses

By Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

Multiple business owners Philip and Beverly Williams in front of the sign of their restaurant in Bay St. Louis.

Philip and Beverly Williams are owners and operators of five businesses in Bay St. Louis. The couple operates a restaurant, a catering business, an automotive detail shop, a firewood supply company and a commercial property rental business, all under the parent company W, Inc.

Over the past fifteen years, Philip has been a busy entrepreneur. The automotive detail shop which had operated as a second job for Philip since 1980 became his primary source of income after he was laid off from a position as a systems analyst at a Hancock County ammunition plant. Philip and Beverly were married in 1983 and shortly after the layoff, he started Williams Pit Bar-B-Que. Since then the other businesses appear to have evolved.

The catering business developed

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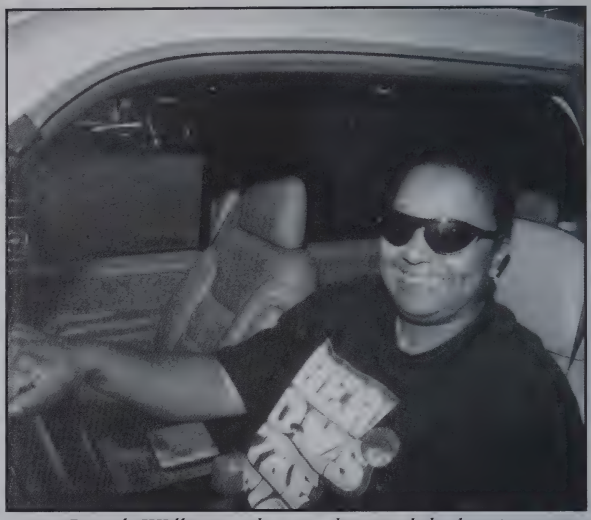
from the restaurant's reputation for quality barbecue. Customers requested he cater parties and special events. This business has grown to the point that every weekend the company prepares food for at least one event, sometimes as many as three or four.

The firewood business evolved as a result of people driving by their home, seeing the wood that was used in the barbecue business, and they began selling firewood during the winter months.



Beverly Williams advertises her work by keeping her personal vehicle shining and spotless.

The couple acquired a two-story, 9000 square foot, light factory/commercial property in the heart of the black community in Bay St. Louis. The property houses Williams Pit Bar-B-Que, Williams Detail Shop and Querita's Beauty Salon, and the offices of W, Inc. Half of the square footage is unoccupied and under renovation for a future W, Inc. project.

"It was just his determination," Beverly explained her husband's ability to turn the misfortune of losing a good job into an opportunity. "He made the tables. He painted them. He painted the walls. My brother gave us the chairs, and he painted them. All the equipment we had, he moved into the restaurant. He spent a week working inside the restaurant. He would sleep in the chair, and then go back to work. He was over there for four days, unshaven and tired.

"I'd bring the children over to see their dad. The kids played with the tools. We bought them some chalk so that they could write on the floor and be near their dad."

Like most businesses getting started presented certain challenges, but not any too difficult to overcome to the point of sending Philip seeking employment. Instead, he has focused on his special talents, experiences and resources; and he says he that he never wants to trade the freedom self-employment has afforded him.

"The main thing I enjoy is that I am able to utilize the skills I have attained over the years at will," he explained. "I can leave here right now and go get lost in the detail shop or assemble my motorcycle. If I had to make an immediate move like an emergency, I

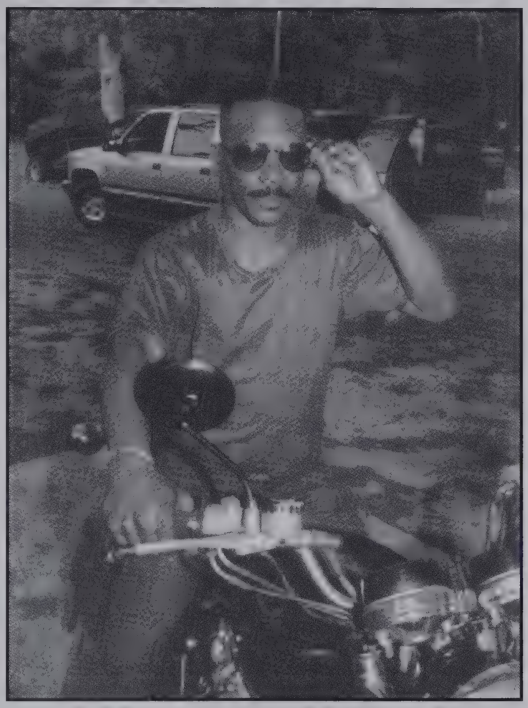
could shut the place down and do what I have to do."

Beverly agrees that the positives of being self-employed far outweigh any negatives. She especially enjoys the fact that she is able to spend time with her three daughters in the morning before school and she is there to greet them as they get off the bus after school.

""I enjoy watching my children get on the bus in the morning and watching them get off the bus in the afternoon, and being able to ask them how their day went," said Beverly.

"I don't see any drawbacks of being self employed," added Beverly who operates the automotive detail business. "For what I do, I tell my client that it will take me a certain number of hours to do a car, and I charge them accordingly. I know my work and I am good at what I do, because it has my name of it. I like what I do. If you don't like it you're not going to do a good job."

There is no doubt that Philip and Beverly enjoy being business owners. In fact, they confided that they are planning a business to be housed in the vacant commercial space they own. They said that this project is two to three years away from being realized. Philip explained that events in their lives appear to happen in five year cycles and they are at the mid-point in the thought processes and planning stages of this future business.



Philip Williams relaxes from his demanding business schedule by riding the motorcycle which he assembled.

"I love being self-employed and the fact that I can determine my destiny," explained Philip. "You can make as much as you want to make, as much as your potential will allow you. And you can't blame anyone for your failures."

Williams Pit Bar-B-Que and the other businesses are located on the corner of Washington Street and Old Spanish Trail in Bay St. Louis.

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An Example of Hard Work, Teamwork and Happiness

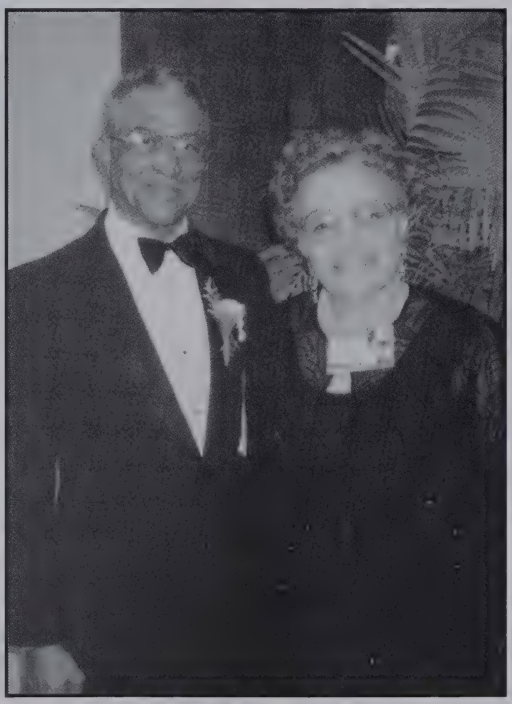
By Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

Teamwork is a term that is referenced routinely during the early spring by college basketball coaches who have been fortunate to succeed at winning another game as the championship game approaches. It is very clear that this quality is essential for teams to succeed in sports as well as corporate environments. Teamwork is also a very critical ingredient in marriages and families that succeed.

Teamwork is a visible ingredient in the marriage of George and Evelena Watson. They have been married for fifty-two years and have spent their lives serving the Pass Christian and Mississippi Coast communities.

Mr. Watson has been a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent over the course of his thirty-six year career as an educator. He has also served on various boards and commissions along the coast and is president of Bradley and Watson, Inc., a corporation Mrs. Watson and he started in the mid-1970s with long-time friends Willie and Anne Bradley.

His career accomplishments and community successes have been important to him, but what has been most important to him is having a happy family. And this, he says, is the



George T. and Evelyn Watson

result of Mrs. Watson's work with the family.

"My gratification comes from having a happy home," explains Mr. Watson. "The years we spent together, the understanding that we developed came from sharing each other's pains and joys. Whatever we are is because we stayed together and worked together.

"One of my goals was to make sure we have this cohesiveness, this mutual feeling for each other," he adds. "We have two daughters who love us very much and we love them very much. There is nothing they wouldn't do to make us happy. That makes me happy."

Evelena Watson enjoys working outside and keeping her trees and garden in great shape.

"When we decided what we were going to do with our lives, we decided that he would be the breadwinner," says Mrs. Watson. "And I did everything I could to make sure that he was successful. We had goals and he wanted to reach them.

"We have done a lot of things, considering we started out with nothing," Mrs. Watson adds. "He started out as a school teacher, making a little bit of money. Every time something came along, we reached out and grabbed it, like when he got the sabbatical at the University of Miami."

"Whenever opportunities arose that would further us, it was my responsibility to take advantage of them," adds Mr. Watson. " I was established as assistant superintendent of schools here, but we had an opportunity to go to Miami, because we felt that somewhere it would pay dividends. We packed up and moved down to Miami and I did all the course work to complete my doctorate degree. You have to make those kinds of sacrifices

George T. Watson and his lovely wife Evelena truly understand the importance of doses of daily laughter.

if you are going to be successful and raise a family."

"Our lives have been lots of ups and downs, but we have had lots of successes," Mrs. Watson recalls. "Acquiring the business and all the accolades he has received has made me feel real good because I was a part of it."

One of the accolades that has had special significance to the couple is Pass Christian's Citizen of the Year Award which Mr. Watson received in 1978. This award is special to the Watsons because it recognized a man who was a role model for young people, a man from the community who had overcome obstacles and had succeeded.

"I wanted to live such a life that if your son said *I want to be like George Watson*, you wouldn't be ashamed," he explains.

Being a good role model has always been important to Mr. Watson. He sincerely believes that what young people observe and experience on a daily basis will have an impact on the decisions they make in life. In fact, he accepted a position to serve on one of the State's most prestigious commissions in order to be an example for young men to follow. Not only was he very qualified to serve on Mississippi's Public Service Commission, he also had a serious desire to inspire other young men to become involved in serving the State of Mississippi.

"I took that job with the hope that

I could help young black men to see that if you carry yourself in an exemplary way, the sky is the limit. You will be noticed," he explains. "That job was coveted. It is one of the most important jobs in government and one of the least known. We regulated telephone and water, by setting rates customers pay. I was appointed to the post by Governor Ray Mabus."

Mr. Watson was also appointed to the State College Board by then Governor William Winter. He accepted this position with one primary goal in mind.

"The main reason I accepted the college board position was to be an example: If they could look over the state and find a little black boy in Pass Christian, I must be doing something right. If I can do it, they can do it. I don't have any special qualities other than I work hard."

The examples the Watsons set are calculated. Being in the public eye, they understand that every move they make is observed. However, they truly welcome the responsibility of being role models. The ease at which they handle the public responsibility probably comes from the many years they have been involved with the education of young people.

They also understand that if business is going to thrive in our communities, there is need for solid examples of entrepreneurs in our community as well as solid relationships involving members of the community. Their relationships with their business partners, the Bradleys, is a wonderful example as well as a confirmation that people within the community can succeed working together.

"We have had a good cohesive relationship with the Bradleys," he explains. "Neither one of us had egos. We have been in business for twenty-three years. You wouldn't find many businesses that have lasted as long as ours and that have been as successful as ours."

"The success comes from being good Christians and putting God first," Mrs. Watson explains with the enthusiasm of a cheerleader approaching the start of a big game. "We have had a lot of fun, within the realm of decency. And we have been to a lot of places. We've visited San Francisco five or six times and each time we've seen something different."

Visiting San Francisco is one of the Watsons favorite getaways, but there is no question that home for them is Pass Christian. From their home on Second Street they have a view of the Gulf. The view is screened by the beauty of leaves and branches of a great, old live oak tree in their front yard.

The huge tree is a symbol of strength and stability, having withstood the twenty-four foot tidal wave and tornadoes of Hurricane Camille in 1969. Like the huge oak tree, the Watsons thrive in Pass Christian.

"Pass Christian has always been a unique community," Mr. Watson affirms. "Even going back to the depression. Pass Christian is as nice a place to live – and I am including California – as any place you could live."

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
What is SHRM?

by Yolanda Mayberry

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the leading voice of the human resource profession. SHRM provides its membership with education and information services, conferences and seminars, government and media representation, and on-line services and publications to more than 110,000 professional and student members throughout the world. The Society, the world's largest human resource management association, is a founding member of the North American Human Resource Management Association (NAHRMA) and a founding member of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA).

The Harrison and Hancock SHRM chapter, an affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management also believe professional development is an ongoing process. The purpose of the chapter is to improve the competence of human resource administrators; to raise the standards of performance in all phases of human resource administration; and to encourage adherence to the Society's Code of Ethics. Our group is presently composed of the following industries but because we would like to be inclu-

sive of a diverse population, we extend an opportunity for you to also join SHRM:

- Banks/Credit Unions
- Casinos/Gaming Corporations
- Colleges/Schools
- Construction Companies
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- Hospitals/Ambulance/ Medical Centers
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- Law Firms
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- Provide networking opportunities and strategies through sharing of techniques that can be transformed into your workplace environment.

If you meet one of the following categories, you too can become a member of our local HRM Chapter:

- Individuals engaged in human resource management with at least three years of experience at the exempt level; or any individual certified by the Human Resource Certification Institute; or any faculty member with three or more years experience holding at least assistant professorial rank in HR; or a full-time consultant or attorney.

Individuals in non-exempt HRM positions as well as those who do not meet any of the foregoing categories and have a bonafide interest in human resource management.

To find out how to join SHRM call Yolanda Mayberry, Diversity Chair @ 863-6272

Meetings: 3rd Thursdays of each month

Time: 8a.m.
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Local Dues is only $20. SHRM membership is on an individual basis. SHRM has no corporate or institutional memberships. To join the National SHRM, please contact John Lynch, President at 385-5596 for details. SHRM does not discriminate in individual memberships or chapter affiliations on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, or national origin.

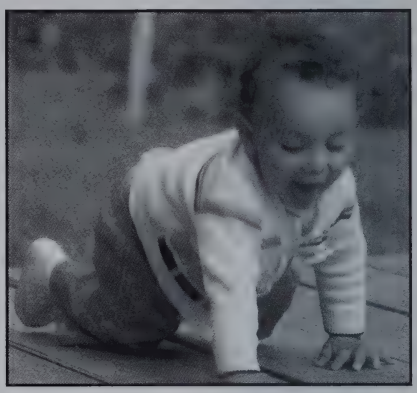
Teenage Pregnancy

by Carlis D. Hinton

There are some who will argue that during the agricultural age girls got married at puberty in order to ensure a large family. The more children you had, the more to work the field. Today, in a technological age, the average household either has two working parents or a single working parent. Almost gone are the days when the wife stays home to raise the kids. Today we are faced with a new dilemma: no one is home to raise the children.

This is a particularly alarming problem for us as black people. 70% of all pregnancies are to teenage unwed mothers; and 90% of those pregnancies are unplanned! How can this be in this age of information?! Kids today "know" about birth control. This, along with the threat of AIDS, why wouldn't a sexually-active teenager protect herself/himself???

Maybe the answer is not as complicated as psychologists, healthcare workers, educators and parents make it out to be. Maybe they don't protect themselves for the same reason they don't wear seatbelts, helmets or life jackets. Or for the same reason they smoke cigarettes and do drugs or eat food that is bad for their health. Because they are kids and aren't concerned with these things at this time in their lives. They worry about how they look, how popular they are or what they should wear., who likes who, and etc. REMEMBER THOSE DAYS!!



The only thing that saved us were our parents. They would look after us and they knew where we were at all times. Sure, we sneaked around, but it was sure harder to do. So, the answer isn't complicated, either.

We need to go back to the old days. After all, THERE REALLY IS NO NEW WAY TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN. WE NEED TO GO BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN WE LOOKED OUT FOR EACH OTHER. I'll watch your kids, you watch mine, and the teacher will back you up. A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY IS THE MEDICINE FOR CURING THIS AILMENT.

Carlis D. Hinton is a registered nurse employed at Memorial Hospital of Gulfport and a member of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Black Nurses Organization, Inc.

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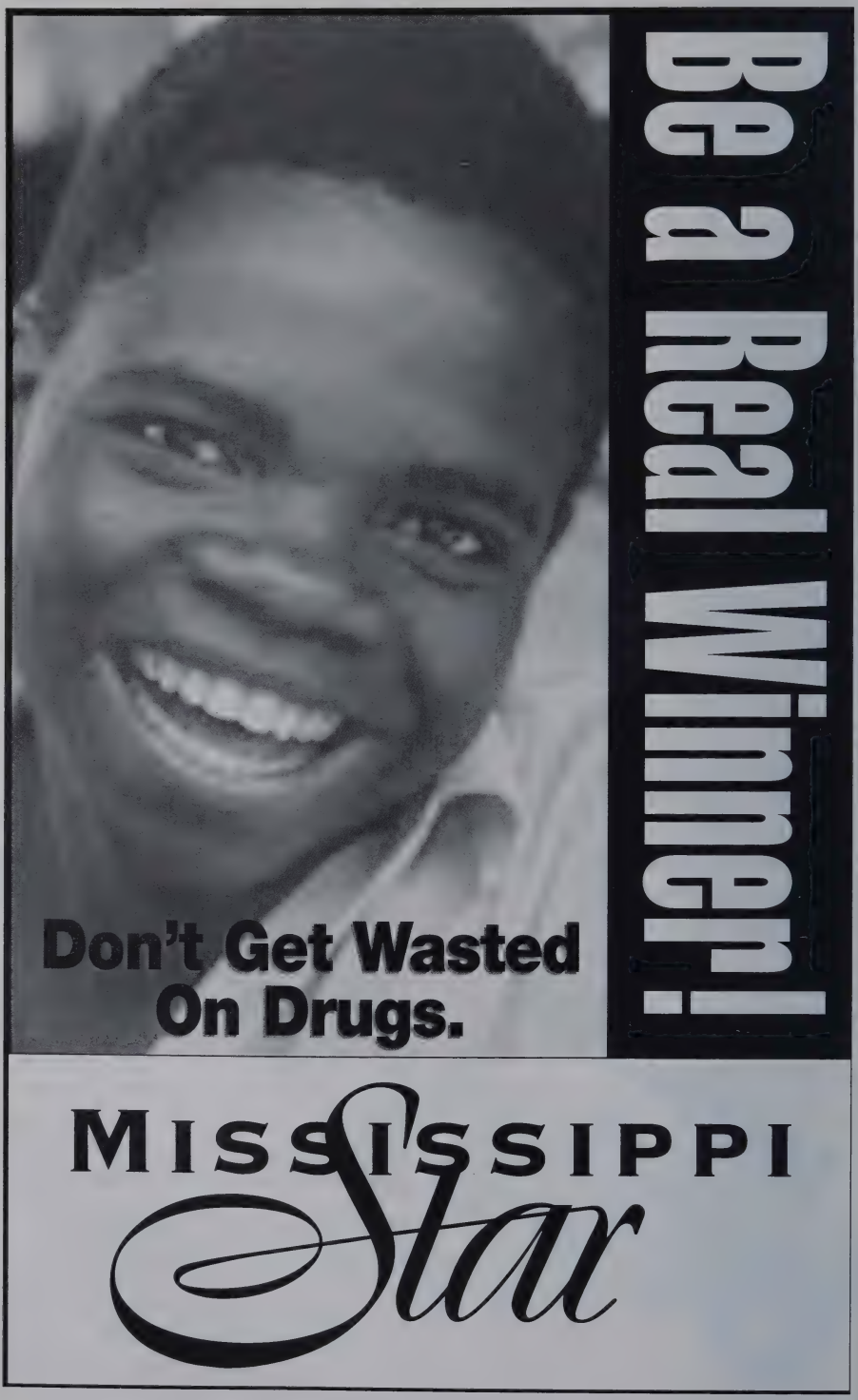
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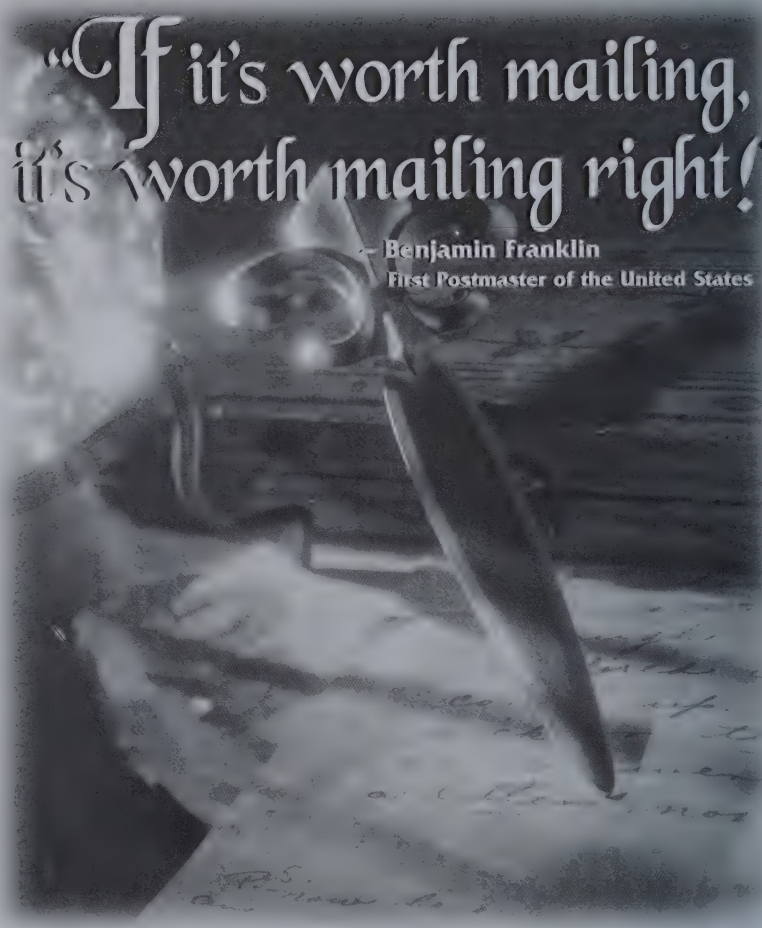
ANTI-DRUG MARCH

The Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church sponsored an Anti-Drug March and Rally on Sunday, March 28, 1999. The March started at 1:30 pm in front of the church and proceeded to the Pass Christian Middle School. Speakers for the Rally were Judge John Whitfield, Pass Christian Police Department and DARE Officers, and Officer Alda Barnes. Games and other fun activities followed the Rally.

Goodwill's Evangelist Committee organized the Rally and March. Churches participating were our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church, St. Stephens Catholic Church, Delisle, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Delisle and First Baptist Church of Pass Christian. There were approximately two hundred participants.



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Coalition of Black Meeting Planners Convene on Gulf Coast

Meeting planners proudly display their state and country flags. Representatives came from forty-seven states and seven Caribbean islands.

Approximately four hundred members and guests of the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners converged on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for their sixteenth annual meeting during the first week in April. Participants came from across the country and several Caribbean islands.

Throughout the week, participants expressed how surprised they were at the natural beauty of The Coast and the warm hospitality they received everywhere they went.

"Nothing compares to coming here personally and moving around the community where it's not organized," said Stephen Richer, Executive Director of the Harrison County Tourism Commission. "The single best way to sell the Mississippi Gulf Coast is to get the people here. What really sells this area is word of mouth. There is nothing like having all these planners coming down here seeing firsthand what the Coast is like.

"I think it's a situation that has broad impact for not only The Coast but the state. In today's Mississippi, the amount of leadership roles played by members of the black communi-

Wilma Harvey, Manager of Tourism Marketing with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau talks with Sandra M. Henderson, Assistant Meetings Manager for National Rural Electric Cooperative Association of Arlington, VA. (Photo submitted by MGCCVB)

Convention attendees, Aaron and Evelyn Harrison of San Antonio, Texas, said they were very surprised and pleased by what they learned about the Mississippi Gulf Coast They enjoyed their visit so much that they plan to come back and bring friends.

ty, academia is something that is not well known nationally. By coming to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and discovering and affirming that there is a broad welcome mat for everyone and that the community which offers the hospitality is as diverse as the population. This sends a correct message across the country that this is an excellent location for meetings conventions, trade shows and personal travel."

Richer added that his office has received some "really lovely letters" from some of the meeting planners telling about how well they were treated in South Mississippi.

"People had a real view of the Coast because it dealt with the community at large," explained Richer. "Many of them took familiarization tours where they moved around by themselves. They were able to interact with a lot of people in the community.

"My reaction of what we've heard and the feedback is pretty much a reflection of what we know about the community ourselves," said Richer. "It is basically a group of people from various backgrounds working together."

The Ojays provided the entertainment for the organization's Sweet Sixteen Banquet. (Eric Labat, photographer)

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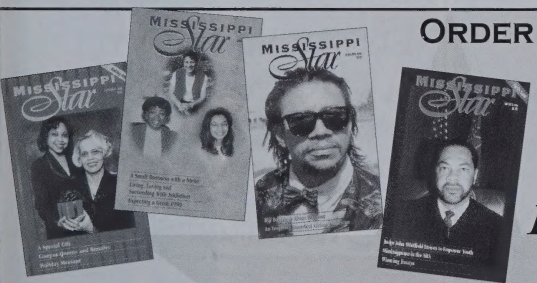

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HANCOCK COUNTY BRANCH
2nd Tuesday
Valena C. Jones Methodist Church

GULFPORT BRANCH
1st Monday
Isiah Fredericks
Community Center

BILOXI BRANCH
4th Thursday
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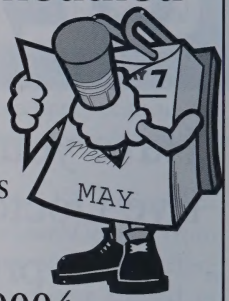
Inform Us of Your Scheduled Events!



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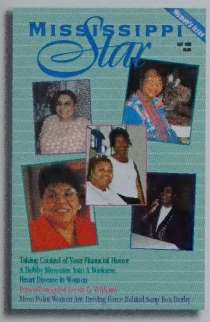

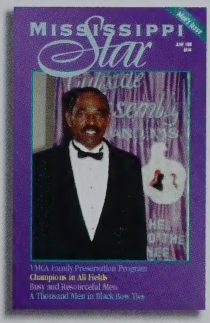
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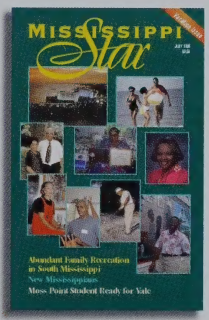
VMA Family Preservation Program
Champions in All Fields
Boys and Inscribed Ties
A Thousand Men in Black Bow Ties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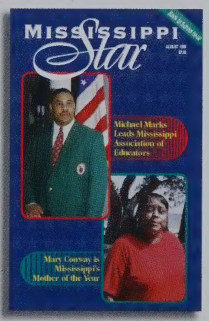
Abundant Family Recreation in South Mississippi
New Mississippians
Moss Point Student Ready for Yale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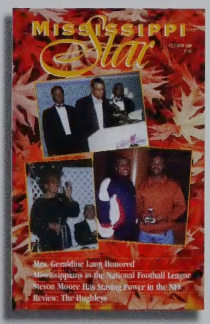
Michael Marks Leads Mississippi Association of Educators
Mary Conway is Mississippi's Mother of the Year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